

# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

## Monterey, California



## THESIS

U.S. SECURITY POSTURE IN THE MIDDLE EAST:  
NEED FOR A CHANGE?

by

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December 2002

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**US SECURITY POSTURE IN THE MIDDLE EAST:  
NEED FOR A CHANGE?**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The United States forward military presence in the Middle East has been on the rise for well over a decade. Recent polling data has indicated that favorable Arab public opinion of the United States and its foreign policy is in decline. This thesis explores the unfavorable opinions of the Arab world toward U.S. foreign policies, utilizing data from recent polls taken in several countries in the Middle East, and suggests a causal relationship between the development of unfavorable opinion in the Arab world with the growth of the U.S. forward military presence in the region. This research provides a breakdown of the growth of the U.S. military footprint in the Middle East over the last two decades. The research presented provides an overview of how U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East has developed and argues the necessity of reform in the current U.S. strategic approach toward the Middle East.

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## CHAPTER I. THESIS DEVELOPMENT

### A. INTRODUCTION

At the end of the Gulf War, the United States employed a military security strategy in the Middle East that was designed to preserve regional stability, deter potential aggressors, and protect the United States strategic interests in the region. There are four main elements to this posture: ensuring access to host nation facilities for ongoing operations and contingencies through bilateral agreements; prepositioning military equipment; building host nation self-defense capabilities through foreign military sales, training and joint exercises; and providing a continuously deployed forward U.S. military presence in the region.<sup>1</sup>

In broader terms, the strategy employed by the United States for Middle Eastern security is one of engagement, forward presence, and rapid response. This strategy has had varying success in the previous ten years for providing regional peace and a semblance of security in the Middle East. Bilateral relationships have been established which have complemented the establishment of a physical infrastructure that allows for rapid U.S. response on short notice. Also, an ongoing investment in the security posture of countries in the region to enable their own self-defense has tangentially contributed to a growing capability for regional defense.<sup>2</sup>

The United States has had various policies in regards to its national interests in the Persian Gulf. Many of

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<sup>1</sup> Cordesman, Anthony. "The Gulf and Transition: U.S. Policy Ten Years after the Gulf War," *CSIS Middle East Studies Program*, October, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> *United States Security Strategy for the Middle East*, Department of Defense, May, 1995.

these policies have had an impact on not only how Americans perceive the Persian Gulf, but also how the populations in the Persian Gulf and the other members of the international community see Americans. In particular, the United States' Post Gulf War security posture has been questioned and attacked. Previous events have left their impact and resulted in an evolution of U.S. policy since the early 1970's. Is the Post Gulf War U.S. security architecture relevant in today's world? Will it continue to protect U.S. interests? Should our response to regional threats remain the same, or be altered?

Overseas presence is the set of U.S. military assets and activities abroad that, as a complement to power projection from CONUS engages in purposeful security commitments and management efforts on behalf of a broad spectrum of national objectives that are "strategic" - that is, political, economic, and military in nature.<sup>3</sup>

The United States military's physical presence in the Middle East is a leading cause of popular disaffection among Arab nationals. This fervor, partially caused by this dissent, helped create an environment where Islamic fundamentalism flourished and grew. It also was a factor in the September 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, as well as numerous previous attacks on various U.S. targets around the world. Recent polling data shows an intensifying disapproval in Arab attitudes toward the United States and U.S. foreign policy. In fact, a majority of Arabs continue to doubt even the possibility of

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<sup>3</sup> Kugler, Richard L. *Changes Ahead: Future Directions for the U.S. Overseas Military Presence*, MR-956-AF, RAND, p. 8.

Arab involvement in the aforementioned attack.<sup>4</sup> Would a reduction in the current U.S. security posture of physical presence in the Middle East designed to bolster foreign public opinion continue to protect U.S. national interests in the region? This thesis argues that a reduction of the U.S. military footprint would not only contribute to a potential increase of foreign popular support, but would continue to protect U.S. interests in the region now and in the future.

This thesis will cover the evolution of U.S. policy and specific events from 1970 to the present day. It will evaluate the viability of the current policy employed in relation to specific regional threats. It will also probe changes in Persian Gulf regional security, future oil capacity and demand, and international relations and reactions to U.S. presence and policy.

United States national security strategy seeks to maintain international allies in the Middle East. In the Gulf, allies in various countries allow the United States to stage logistical gear and equipment, while others also allow a physical presence of United States military personnel and a utilization of their bases for American military operations. These relationships, along with U.S. Naval presence in the region, allow the United States a significant forward deployed force capable of immediate response to security threats within the region. A n erosion of any of these relationships could prove detrimental to U.S. policy implementation in the region.

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<sup>4</sup> Stone, Andrea, Feb 27, 2002, Many in Islamic World doubt Arabs behind 9/11, *USA Today*, [Online]: <http://www.usatoday.com/news/attack/2002/02/27/usat-poll.htm>.

In an atmosphere of anti-U.S. sentiments, some U.S. allies may be politically unable to sustain their support for continued U.S. presence in the region.

The United States also has a significant interest in the oil production countries of the Middle East. Between now and the year 2020, the global economy will need a significant increase in the oil production capacity in the Middle East. The United States has a significant interest in maintaining access to this energy supply in order to support the increased energy consumption of the nation and the world. The world's growing demand for Gulf oil makes fiscal stability and reform of the oil producing nations, particularly Saudi Arabia, extremely important. A solid fiscal grounding is essential to keep oil markets competitive and not artificially high.<sup>5</sup>

#### **B. POLLING DATA**

There have been several recent polls taken in regards to Arab and Muslim public opinion toward the United States and American foreign policy. These polls are interested in explaining the reasons why there are negative and even hostile attitudes toward the United States. This thesis will utilize data taken by polls conducted by Gallup and by Zogby International. This thesis hypothesizes that the United States military's physical presence in the Middle East is a leading cause of dissent among Arab nationals. The September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the pentagon, justify attempts to understand the growing divide between the United States and the Arab

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<sup>5</sup> Energy Information Administration/International Energy Outlook 2001: World Energy Consumption; World Oil Markets; Energy Information Administration, OPEC Revenues Fact Sheet; and OPEC Revenues: Country Details, March 2001; Energy Information Administration, Persian Gulf Oil and Gas Exports Fact Sheet, February 2001.

world. The regions response to the September 11, 2001, attacks are reveling. A surprising response was given by the overwhelming majority of American Muslims, seventy-nine percent of whom believe that U.S. policy toward the Middle East led to the September 11, 2001, attack on the United States, according to a new poll that was conducted by Zogby International and financed by the Pew Charitable Trusts. Sixty-seven percent say that the best way to prevent further unconventional aggressive action is to change U.S. policy in the Middle East.<sup>6</sup>

Recent polls demonstrate the negative Arab views of the United States foreign policy. In fact, a majority of Arabs continue to doubt even the possibility of Arab involvement in the aforementioned attack.<sup>7</sup> Zogby International conducted an intensive research project called "The Ten Nation Impressions of America Poll."<sup>8</sup> Some of their findings are quite eye-opening:

- Incredibly low marks are given everywhere for United States policy toward the Arab nations and toward the Palestinians. The United States is only given single-digit favorable ratings on its dealings with the Arab nations by every Arab nation (except UAE where it is 15%, driven mostly by the large numbers of non-U.A.E. citizens included in the poll). In all countries, more than nine out of ten are unfavorable.
- On U.S. policy toward the Palestinians, the numbers are even lower. Notably, the negative ratings are at least nine out of ten in every Arab nation.
- In every country, the "Palestinian issue" is viewed as "the most" or "a very important" issue facing the Arab

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<sup>6</sup> Paulson, Michael. Dec 29, 2001. Survey: U.S. Muslims fault MidEast Policy, *The Boston Globe*, p. B2.

<sup>7</sup> Stone.

<sup>8</sup> *The Ten Nation Impressions of America Poll report*, Zogby International, April 11, 2002. [Online]: <http://www.zogby.com> (requires an active account for viewing).

world today. The range on this is from two in three in Saudi Arabia up to four in five in Lebanon and Egypt.

- Those polled in every country indicate that they would overwhelmingly react more favorably toward the U.S. if it "were to apply pressure to ensure the creation of an independent Palestinian state". This includes 69% in Egypt, 79% in Saudi Arabia, 87% in Kuwait (91% of Kuwaiti nationals), 59% in Lebanon, and 67% in UAE (76% of Emirates).<sup>9</sup>

Would a reduction in the current U.S. security posture of physical presence in the Middle East designed to bolster foreign public opinion continue to protect U.S. national interests in the region? This thesis argues that a reduction of the U.S. security footprint would not only contribute to a potential increase of foreign popular support, but would protect U.S. interests in the region now and in the future.

### **C. HOW DID WE GET HERE?**

Until the 1970's, the United States had a hands off approach to security in the Persian Gulf region. As British power in the region dwindled, the United States was left with very few options. The Cold War mandated that the United States not allow the Soviet Union to become the preeminent power in the region. When the British finally pulled out, the United States quickly stepped in to fill the void.

The "Twin Pillars" doctrine still allowed the United States to play a minimalist role. Responsibility for the safety and security of the region was given to Iran and Saudi Arabia. As both Saudi Arabia and Iran were major oil producers and the United States had relatively good

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

relations with both countries, the national security interest of maintaining access to oil was relatively secure. This worked relatively well until the Iranian Revolution, when the Shah fell from power. Saudi Arabia was not in the position militarily to ensure the stability of the region. Because of this, President Carter developed the Rapid Deployment Force for the Gulf. President Reagan later created the US Central Command (USCENTCOM) further solidifying the United States willingness to protect the area from outside aggression by the Soviet Union, as well as project a forward presence to encourage stability in the region.<sup>10</sup>

The United States was slowly drawn into the Persian Gulf over several decades. The United States initially, did not take the position as sole guarantor of Persian Gulf stability. The United States did, however, commit to provide forces, training, and equipment to help Gulf nations. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait certainly exacerbated the United States response and further commitment to the region. After Desert Storm, the United States has continually increased the level of U.S. military forces in the region, largely due to the continued enforcement of sanctions and no-fly zones against Iraq.

The United States may have underestimated Saddam Hussein's willingness to utilize the suffering of his own country's population to keep them weak and ensure his continued rule. His continued allowance of suffering has turned not only international attention against the United States sanctions on Iraq, but has also contributed to some

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<sup>10</sup> Martin, Lenore G. "Patterns of Regional Conflict and U.S. Gulf Policy," in *U.S. Strategic Interests in the Gulf Region*, W.J. Olson (ed), (1987) Westview Press, p. 19.

of the harsh resentment Arabs seem to be holding against the United States.<sup>11</sup>

The breakdown of the Middle East Peace Process is also a contributing factor to the rise of Arab resentment against the United States. The United States strong support of Israel is also harshly regarded by Arabs. Arabs see the United States holding a dual standard in the region in its stance toward Israel and Arab nations.

The Palestinian struggle against Israel is not something that is new, but has been ongoing for quite some time. The conflict essentially began while the British were influencing the politics of the area and began to call for the partition of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 reaffirmed the partition in 1947, and the state of Israel was born.<sup>12</sup>

There was an immediate negative reaction by the Arab states as they banded together and declared war on Israel. Israel defeated the Arab aggression and in the process, part of the area that was designated for the Palestinian state was conquered by Israel, and led to the displacement of some 750,000 Palestinians.<sup>13</sup> Israel defeated Arab armies again in 1967 and acquired even more territory.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Graham-Brown, Sarah. *Sanctioning Saddam: The Politics of Intervention in Iraq*, St. Martin's Press, 1999.

<sup>12</sup> Schanzer, Jonathan. "Palestinian Uprisings Compared," *The Middle East Quarterly*, Summer 2002, Volume IX, Number 3. [Online]: <http://www.meforum.org/article/206/> [accessed October 16, 2002].

<sup>13</sup> Council on Foreign Relations. (2002). *Flashpoint: Israeli-Palestinian conflict*. Retrieved [October 16, 2002] from LexisNexis Database (Current Issues Universe, A153-16) on the World Wide Web: <http://www.lexisnexus.com/ciuniv>.

<sup>14</sup> Middle East Research and Information Project. (2002). *MERIP primer on the uprising in Palestine*. Retrieved [October 16, 2002] from LexisNexis Database (Current Issues Universe, R119-32) on the World Wide Web: <http://www.lexisnexus.com/ciuniv>.

Israel now occupies the areas of Palestine considered to be the West Bank and the Gaza strip. In conflict with Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits an occupying state from transferring parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies, Israel has built numerous settlements in these regions further exacerbating the tensions and complicating the peace process.

The Middle East Peace Process has been ongoing for some time, now with highlights being the Oslo Accords and the Camp David Summit. However, each time the two groups come together, both sides point to the other with accusations of impropriety. Israeli leaders say Palestinian leader Yassir Arafat broke a series of 1990s peace pacts, used violence as a political tool, and deliberately resorted to terrorism after spurning a generous Israeli proposal at Camp David, while Palestinian leaders say Israel never made a just peace offer and continues to besiege them, illegally occupy the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and confiscate Palestinian land for Jewish settlements.

#### **D. U.S. NATIONAL INTERESTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

The growing Arab outcry against the United States and the increasing impact of the attacks against American targets must be weighed carefully against the American ability to protect its national interests in the Middle East. The National Security Strategy for a Global Age (NSS) describes the national interests of the United States in the Middle East as a comprehensive and lasting Middle

East peace, maintaining worldwide access to oil, and ensuring the wellbeing and security of Israel.<sup>15</sup>

Arab rulers are also very conscious of their legitimacy to rule and are becoming increasingly aware of their populations discontent. To that end, Arab rulers must balance the extent to which they can cooperate with the United States as much of the U.S. stated policy is perceived as biased by their Arab populations, who "are far more critical, less understanding, and less forgiving of the U.S. pro-Israeli stance."<sup>16</sup> Negative Arab perceptions could possibly undermine the friendships and alliances that the United States currently has with Arab regimes. If the United States wants to maintain its influence in the region, steps should immediately be taken to assuage the Arab populace's negative opinions.

## **E. ORGANIZATION**

Chapter II will examine the evolution of the U.S. security policy in the Middle East. It will look at some of the major events that altered this strategy prior to 1990. It will also describe some of the strategies the United States has utilized in the past as a basis for its policy such as deterrence, containment, and currently, preemption. This chapter will lay the groundwork for the rest of the thesis as it describes the reasons employed in changing our security posture as well as the impact of our security posture on not only how Americans perceive the Persian Gulf, but also how the populations in the Persian

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<sup>15</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy For A Global Age*, December 2000.

<sup>16</sup> Hajjar, Sami G. March 2002, *U.S. Military Presence in the Persian Gulf: Challenges and Prospects*, *Strategic Studies Institute*, Army War College.

Gulf and the other members of the international community see Americans.

Chapter III will continue to examine the evolution of the U.S. security policy in the Middle East, focusing on the Post Gulf War security posture. It will provide an overview of the operationalization of the security posture by providing details on where and what it is to include a description of forward deployed forces and how they have evolved over the last two decades. It will discuss agreements which are currently in place for security in the region, whether formal or informal. It will look into the agreements in place for the prepositioning of military gear and equipment in the Middle East and also the conditions in place for the use of host nation facilities by U.S. military personnel.

Chapter IV will provide information on emerging threats in the region as well as issues that could affect U.S. security policy. It will focus on the security posture undertaken by the United States in the Post September 11, 2001, period. It will discuss international concerns with the effect of U.S. policy on the Arab population. Lastly, U.S. foreign relations with countries in the region will highlight potential future issues affecting our security posture in the area. It will discuss public perception from the Middle Eastern perspective towards the United States foreign policy, and the potential impact of unfavorable public support. This chapter will culminate with a discussion of the prevailing U.S. policy to include statements made by President Bush in his 2002 State of the Union address where he asserted the existence of an "axis of evil."

Chapter V will provide a policy analysis of the current Post Gulf War security posture as it relates to the issues presented in Chapter Four. It will focus on the necessity of having a forward deployed presence in the Middle East as a deterrent to Saddam Hussein and for protection of our regional allies. It will focus particularly upon the impact that the United States forward presence is having upon the Arab population of the region and discuss policy recommendations for dealing with the issue. It will also discuss the relevance, if any, of a massive U.S. forward military presence in the region in the advent of Saddam Hussein's removal from influence in the region.

## CHAPTER II. EVOLUTION OF U.S. SECURITY POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

### A. EVOLUTION OF POLICY

During the second half of the twentieth century, U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East centered on protecting the oil flow, supporting Israel and the region's pro-Western governments and maintaining political stability--not just to keep the status quo, but largely to deter, contain and, if necessary, confront communism. Today this list has expanded to include other objectives such as combating terrorism, brokering a truce between the Palestinians and Israelis, and preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In the pursuit of these objectives, the United States has relied on the use of force, covert intervention, economic and military assistance, arms sales, military presence and diplomacy.<sup>17</sup>

The United States policy of engagement in the Persian Gulf has been evolving since the late 1940's. Different policy makers and significant events have contributed greatly to the ever-increasing numbers of United States military personnel in the Persian Gulf region. Initially, the United States stationed U.S. Navy personnel in Bahrain for fueling purposes, while the U.S. naval vessels remained stationed over the horizon.<sup>18</sup>

A major reason for this was the perceived oil shortage in the United States, forcing the United States Navy to become heavily dependent on Persian Gulf fuel supplies. The initial forces and support infrastructure were based in Bahrain which provided readily available access. Their

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<sup>17</sup> Monshipoure, Mahmood. "The Paradoxes of U.S. policy in the Middle East," *Middle East Policy*, vol. 9, no. 03, September, 2002. p. 66.

<sup>18</sup> Palmer, Michael A. *Guardians of the Gulf: A History of America's Expanding Role in the Persian Gulf, 1833-1992*, p. 45.

function was simply to help "monitor and control the logistical effort" of accessibility of Persian Gulf oil to the Navy.<sup>19</sup> By 1951, a headquarters element, flagship, destroyers and aircraft were based in Bahrain.

The policy set forth by the United States in the Persian Gulf was relatively successful. The United States was able to maintain its influence in the world oil market while limiting its military exposure in the region. However, when the British decided to end their protectorate of the region and withdrew their military forces in 1970, the United States was drawn increasingly into the region, focusing more and more of the efforts of its military into maintaining the stability of an increasingly unstable Persian Gulf environment. With the complete British pullout from the region in 1970, the United States was forced to increase its military presence in the region for several reasons; but mainly, ensuring continued access to Persian Gulf oil and maintaining a strategic location which had importance in the Cold War struggle with the Soviet Union.

On March 5, 1957, the Eisenhower Doctrine was introduced as a result of increasing tensions and the British inability to ensure protection of Western influences and the ever-increasing distrust of the Soviet Union. It stated that the United States was prepared to use force to assist any nation or group of nations against armed aggression from any country controlled by international communism. This marked a change in the policy set forth by the United States and required the development of a military force structure that would be

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

able to execute large-scale combat operations in the Middle East.<sup>20</sup>

The 1960's saw little change in American Policy in the Middle East, despite regional instability, although foreign forces were committed on numerous occasions. Egyptian forces intervened in Northern Yemen in their civil war and the United States deployed fighters to Saudi Arabia in Operation Hard Surface in 1965. Tensions were beginning to mount in the Middle East, particularly after the 1967 Six Day War. There were violent demonstrations against the United States that occurred in Bahrain and in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.<sup>21</sup>

President Johnson's attention was on Vietnam, and as the British continued their pullout from the Middle East, defense of the region was becoming a concern for the U.S. On July 25, 1969, the Nixon Doctrine was born, refuting the American role as the world's policeman. President Nixon remarked that the United States could not take the responsibility for the defense of developing nations, and that each nation should assume the responsibility for their own defense. Further, the United States stood poised to reduce their involvement and presence from other nations' affairs.<sup>22</sup>

It was in this framework that the U.S. developed the Twin Pillars policy. As the British withdrew from the region, the Shah of Iran filled the vacuum, allowing the United States to take a behind the scenes role in the defense of the region. As a friend to the United States, the Shah and Iran benefited greatly from increased access

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pgs. 81-83.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

to Western weapons and technology, while the United States continued interest in maintaining access to Persian Gulf oil was ensured. In an effort to calm growing Arab suspicions about Iran, Saudi Arabia was named as a coequal partner in the defense of the region. Regional concerns and disagreements eventually led to an arms race between Iran and Saudi Arabia, but more importantly, between Iran and Iraq.<sup>23</sup>

The second half of the 1970's brought about another plethora of changes in the Middle East, both internally and externally. In 1977, President Carter signed the Presidential Review Memorandum 10, which declared the "Persian Gulf as a vulnerable and vital region, to which greater military concern ought to be given." In August of that same year, in Presidential Directive 18, President Carter called for the establishment of the Rapid Deployment Force, designed specifically to quickly respond to regions of national concern, signaling the growing United States resolve and willingness to become involved in the Persian Gulf region.<sup>24</sup>

In the 1980's, President Carter declared "an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the...Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."<sup>25</sup> This solidified the United States interests in maintaining an active role in Persian Gulf security. President Reagan further affirmed this policy

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pgs 87-92.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>25</sup> Bill, James A. *The Geometry of Instability in the Persian Gulf: The Rectangle of Tension*, p. 107.

and promulgated the United States resolve to maintain the free flow of oil out of the Persian Gulf and to keep the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's major oil chokepoints, open.<sup>26</sup>

The Revolution in Iran marked a turning point for United States involvement in the region, creating a great concern with the Ayatollah Khomeini and the Mullahs complete rejection of the United States and Western influence. The Twin pillars policy of the 1970s proved disastrous with the fall of Shah, and the takeover of the American Embassy in Tehran became a defining event for the United States in the Middle East. As the United States entered the 1980s, policies openly acknowledged the necessity to defend the region. The United States was increasingly drawn into the Persian Gulf in the second half of the 1980s by the Iran-Iraq war. The United States support and favor shown toward Iraq exacerbated hostilities and tension between the United States and Iran and left the two countries on the brink of war.

President Reagan continued to build upon the Rapid Deployment Force which President Carter had initiated. The United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) was created in 1983, and the commitment to the region continued to grow with each successive Commander in Chief (CINC). The creation of USCENTCOM greatly increased U.S. focus toward the region and provided a conduit through which the United States pursued its policies and strategies for the region. The creation of USCENTCOM demonstrated to the world the

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<sup>26</sup> Palmer, p. 113.

United States commitment to providing a military presence in the Middle East.<sup>27</sup>

In 1984, Iran started to target oil exports to the West. This was the start of the Tanker War, an escalation that seriously threatened the flow of oil to the West. The most impacted of these moderate states was Kuwait, who, for security reasons that included Iraq maintaining geographic hegemony over the small emirate, was somewhat more overt in its logistical and financial support of Iraq. Because of this, Iran expressly targeted Kuwaiti oil production and shipping.<sup>28</sup>

The United States was drawn into an active roll in the Persian Gulf in 1987 when Kuwait sought out help in late 1986 by first inquiring help from the U.S., and then, after an initial U.S. rejection, also opening the request to the Soviet Union, for protection of Kuwaiti tankers in the Persian Gulf. Chiefly to counter the potential of growing Soviet influence in the region, the United States agreed to re-flag eleven Kuwaiti tankers in 1987. This agreement provided protection of Kuwaiti oil tankers with the same level of determination that the U.S. Navy protected all U.S. flagships. Because the United States rescinded their initial rejection and agreed to the Kuwaiti request, the Kuwaitis were allowed to relegate the support offered by the Soviets to a much smaller degree (and subsequent influence) than what the Soviets had offered. In May of 1987, the USS Stark was struck by Iraqi missiles and killed 37 Americans, introducing the United States to the

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>28</sup> Shahram Chubin, Shahram and Tripp, Charles. *Iran and Iraq at War*, Westview Press, 1988, pgs. 154-157.

potential costs involved with their continued participation in the Persian Gulf.<sup>29</sup>

Tensions between the United States and Iran continued to grow. Several events played out that brought the United States and Iran dangerously close to full-scale war. On September 21, the United States Navy caught the Iranian amphibious ship, *Iran Ajr*, dropping mines in the gulf 50 miles NE of Bahrain and subsequently attacked it. Additionally, on October 8, Iranian gunboats were sunk by U.S. helicopters. In retaliation, the Iranians fired Silkworm anti-ship missiles at the re-flagged tanker *Sea Isle City* and struck it. The U.S. Navy then further responded by destroying two Iranian oil platforms that were being used as military outposts. These actions further deepened the growing commitment and involvement of the United States in the security of the region resulting in the maintenance of a much higher military presence in the region.<sup>30</sup>

Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait made necessary an even larger buildup of American military forces in the region. After Iraq's invasion and attempted annexation of Kuwait, the United States quickly showed how deep their resolve for the security of the region was by deploying 500,000 troops to the region for the defense of Kuwait. Of course, the end of the Persian Gulf War brought a mass reduction of those forces deployed to the region, however, the United States left a much larger contingent in place than had ever been there before. The numbers have continued to grow since that point. The United States

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<sup>29</sup> Palmer, pgs. 122-124.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

commitment to the region was and continues to be in full force.

Since the end of the Persian Gulf War, the United States has been very active in implementing and maintaining its four pronged security approach of: ensuring access to host nation facilities for ongoing operations and contingencies through bilateral agreements; prepositioning military equipment; building host nation self-defense capabilities through foreign military sales, training and joint exercises; and providing a continuously deployed forward U.S. military presence in the region.<sup>31</sup> The military footprint is growing larger and is being maintained on a near continuous basis.

Various Defense Cooperation Agreements have been made with Oman (1990), Saudi Arabia (1990), Bahrain (1990), Kuwait (1991), Qatar (1992), and the UAE (1994).<sup>32</sup> These agreements vary and the details are classified, but the end results allow the United States to maintain a force presence in the region, utilize host country bases and air stations, and preposition equipment. The agreements also entail the specifics on paying the costs for these security arrangements, the majority of which is covered by the Persian Gulf States.

As shown, the United States policy as protectorate of the Persian Gulf region has evolved over several decades. The United States did not start off with the intention of ever stationing large numbers of U.S. military personnel in the region in case a contingency occurred. However, the growing volatility of the area combined with the great

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<sup>31</sup> Cordesman, Anthony. "The Gulf and Transition: U.S. Policy Ten Years After the Gulf War," CSIS, October, 2000.

<sup>32</sup> Hajjar, p. 20.

distrust the United States has toward Iran and Iraq has resulted in the ever increasing footprint of the U.S. military in the region.

The American policies being promulgated against Arab countries have increased the strain felt by the Arab populace. Regardless of how helpful U.S. policies toward Iraq may be for other Arab countries in the region, the refusal to deal with the same resolve toward other Arab issues such as the Middle East Peace Process is resulting in the growing dissatisfaction and resentment against the United States having a forward deployed military presence in the region at all for any reason.

#### **B. AVAILABLE STRATEGIES**

The United States has historically utilized a variety of policy umbrellas to promulgate its interests around the world. From the basic to the intricate, each policy met with varying degrees of success, with no one policy rising to the surface as the answer. In a dynamic environment such as the Persian Gulf, the United States stalwart commitment to the security of its national interests is one of the few reasons that there is any stability at all in the region. There has not been a single policy able to accomplish all of the objectives the United States has in the Persian Gulf region. The United States continues to utilize whatever policy best seems to fit the particular issue at hand. Those policies continue to evolve; however, the basis for those policies continues to remain the same. As President Bush stated in his speech at West Point on June 1, 2002, "Some worry that it is somehow undiplomatic or impolite to speak the language of right and wrong. I disagree. Different circumstances require different

methods, but not different moralities."<sup>33</sup> A brief description of some of the various policies that the United States has employed is as follows.

### **1. Deterrence**

The mere forward presence of the American military serves notice to those who may aggressively challenge the United States or its allies, that America is able and willing to quickly react to eliminate a potential threat. The majority of states utilize the strategy of deterrence in one form or another. Whether it is a powerful nation trying to intimidate another nation and either stop an action from occurring or ending it when it does, or a lesser nation trying to impose its will on another, deterrence is part of the strategy. Voluntary cooperation is easier to obtain if the nation has the capability of striking back. Deterrence can involve the use of force or the mere threat of the use of force. It sends the signal that there will be consequences for an action or continued action.<sup>34</sup>

### **2. Containment**

The strategy of containment evolved during the Cold War era when the United States feared the expansion of Communism and the Soviet Union. Containment came about as an American response to an article written by George Kennan, published under the pseudonym "X" in *Foreign Affairs* in July of 1947, called "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." He stated that the Soviet empire was going to become increasingly difficult to deal with, but that the

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<sup>33</sup> The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> Axelrod, Robert. *The Evolution of Cooperation*, Basic Books, 1984, p. 145.

United States had within its power to substantially increase the strains under which Soviet power must operate. While waiting for the Soviet Union to relinquish its status as Communist and behave according to generally accepted norms for international behavior, the United States concentrated on containing Soviet expansion.<sup>35</sup>

### **3. Dual Containment**

The Dual Containment policy came about in the 1990's during the Clinton Administration. It was essentially a response to the perceived growing instability in the Middle East, particularly with Iran and Iraq. Dual Containment involved the containment of both Iran and Iraq in an effort to stabilize the region and keep the regimes in power from pushing their will on their neighbors. In its efforts to weaken the two nations, Dual Containment was largely executed with economic sanctions emplaced upon Iran by the United States and upon Iraq by the United Nations. Forces were maintained in the surrounding region, particularly in Saudi Arabia and Turkey, to enforce the no-fly zones in Iraq. This was unique from Iran in that it essentially formed an internal containment upon Saddam Hussein, greatly hindering his ability to aggressively influence the different ethnic populations of his own country.<sup>36</sup>

### **4. The Bush Doctrine**

President Bush Jr. set forth a policy of preemption in the September, 2002, version of the National Security Strategy of the United States of America. Preemption gives the United States the ability to act preemptively on the

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<sup>35</sup> Schulzinger, Robert D. *U.S. Diplomacy since 1900*, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 209.

<sup>36</sup> Brzezinski, Zbigniew, Brent Scowcroft, and Richard Murphy. "Differentiated Containment." *Foreign Affairs*, (May-June 1997): 20-29.

existence of an imminent threat in self-defense.<sup>37</sup> It takes away the reactive stance of the nation and fills the gap with a proactive stance towards the eradication of threats against the United States and its allies.<sup>38</sup> Instead of waiting for an attack to occur again the United States, if America receives a legitimate threat, it will strike first. This is based upon the concept that "international law recognizes that nations need not suffer an attack before they can lawfully take action to defend themselves against forces that present an imminent danger of attack."<sup>39</sup> Preemption could be called one of the most stringent forms of deterrence.

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<sup>37</sup> The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, p. 16.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

### CHAPTER III. EVOLUTION OF U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE

We need prepositioning in the region because it cuts the time necessary to bring in large-scale forces. We also need a very balanced exercise program that permits us periodically to come-balanced in the sense that it does things that are mutually beneficial to their military and ours, assuring that we're favorably received. We need forward-presence forces on a temporary basis-obviously naval forces, air expeditionary forces, plus ground forces in Kuwait. We can adjust the frequency of their deployment or the length of their stay depending on our threat assessment.<sup>40</sup>

Forward presence "demonstrates U.S. commitment, facilitates access, enhances deterrence, and supports transition from peace to war."<sup>41</sup> The total forward presence would be the sum of U.S. military forces in theatre; prepositioned equipment and military construction designed for a fluid rapid deployment to the region; as well as ongoing military operations, security assistance, and exercises.

There are many reasons for having a capable forward presence in the Middle East. The objectives for USCENTCOM include: deterring aggression while demonstrating U.S. commitment; protect shipping and enforcing UN resolutions; theatre missile defense; gaining and maintaining access and influence; enhancing interoperability and military to military contacts; in-place crisis response; and easing the transition from peace to war.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Interview with Anthony Zinni: "Avoid a Military Showdown with Iraq" Middle East Quarterly, September 1998. Available [Online]: <http://www.meforum.org/article/408/>.

<sup>41</sup> USCENTCOM, Ch. 6, Forward Presence Overview. <http://www.milnet.com/milnet/pentagon/centcom/chap6/forward.htm>.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

The United States has assumed almost total responsibility for Persian Gulf security since the end of the Gulf War. This has required many formal and informal security arrangements with the Gulf countries. The Arab leaders all believe that the presence of the U.S. military in the region helps to preserve stability as long as it is maintained with a low visibility.<sup>43</sup> Because of regional sensitivities, however, the United States is currently not allowed to permanently base U.S. forces in many Gulf countries. The extent of forward deployed military personnel was noted by General Franks (Commander in Chief, USCENTCOM) in March, 2001, to be between 18,500 and 25,000 uniformed men and women, the majority of which are in place to enforce the no-fly zones in Iraq.<sup>44</sup>

#### **A. BREAKDOWN OF THE U.S. MILITARY FOOTPRINT**

The United States maintains the bulk of its forward military presence in the following countries in the Persian Gulf: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, and Oman. A large majority of that number, however, is afloat, and will not be counted in the country by country analysis of forces in-country.

##### **1. Measuring Current Presence**

The numbers of U.S. military forces in Middle Eastern countries have significantly increased over the last two decades. When compared with the numbers tabulated by the Department of Defense<sup>45</sup> in 2001 with the numbers published in 1980, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates,

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<sup>43</sup> Interview with Anthony Zinni: "Avoid a Military Showdown with Iraq" Middle East Quarterly, September 1998.

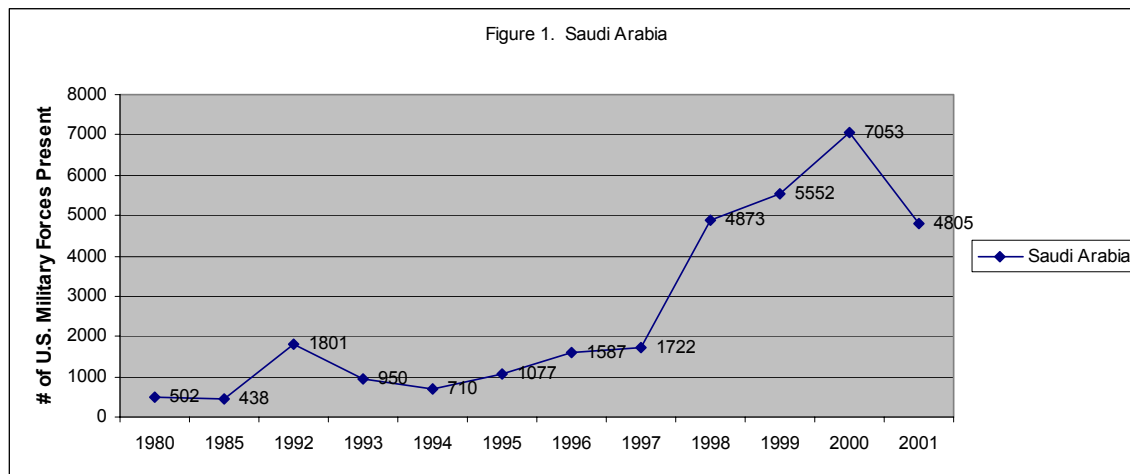
<sup>44</sup> Hajjar, p. 26.

<sup>45</sup> Statistics were taken from the Active Duty Military Personnel Strengths by Regional Area and by Country (309A) published quarterly by the Department of Defense. All statistics used for this analysis were published at the end of September on the years in question.

and Oman have all seen substantial increases in the number of U.S. military personnel forward deployed on their soil.

#### ***a. Saudi Arabia***

The majority of U.S. military personnel in Saudi Arabia are located at Prince Sultan Airbase and at Eskan Village.<sup>46</sup> In 1980, the United States had a total of 502 military personnel in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. There was a tremendous buildup of U.S. forces prior to the Gulf war, with the numbers beginning to level out in 1992 and 1993, with only 710 U.S. military troops remaining in 1994. That number began to marginally increase annually after that, with a significant upturn in 1998, 1999, and 2000, when the number of U.S. military personnel had increased to 7053. 2001 brought the first decrease of U.S. forces in the region, lowering the number substantially to 4805. This number is over 900% of the forces which the United States had in country in 1980.

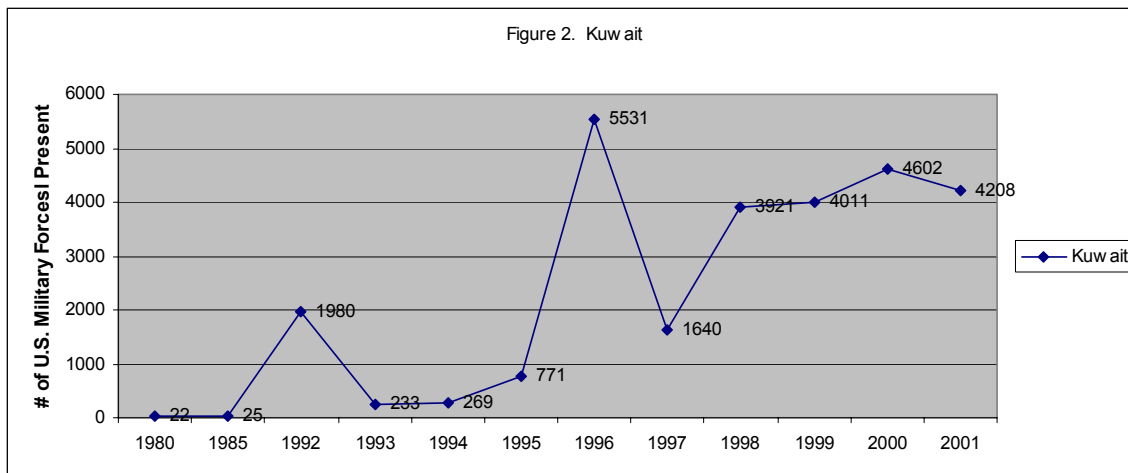


#### ***b. Kuwait***

Kuwait had a finite U.S. military presence in

<sup>46</sup> Loeb, Vernon. "Footprints in Steppes of Central Asia," Washington Post, February 9, 2002.  
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/org/news/2002/020209-attac101.htm>.

1980, and it was not until the Gulf war that the numbers went up. The number of U.S. military personnel spiked dramatically following the conflict, and reached a low of 233 in 1993. Two years later, in 1995, that number had risen over 300% to 771. The spike in 1996 was due to Operation Desert Strike which was carried out on September 4, 1996.<sup>47</sup> In 2000, the number of U.S. military personnel in the country had increased dramatically, to 4602, before it again lowered in 2001. Compared to the paltry number of personnel shortly after the gulf war, Kuwait's portion of U.S. military personnel has exploded, leaving Kuwait second only to Saudi Arabia in total numbers of U.S. military personnel stationed or temporarily residing on their soil, the majority of which are at Ali Al Salem, Ahmed Al Jaber, and Camp Doha.<sup>48</sup>



### ***c. Oman***

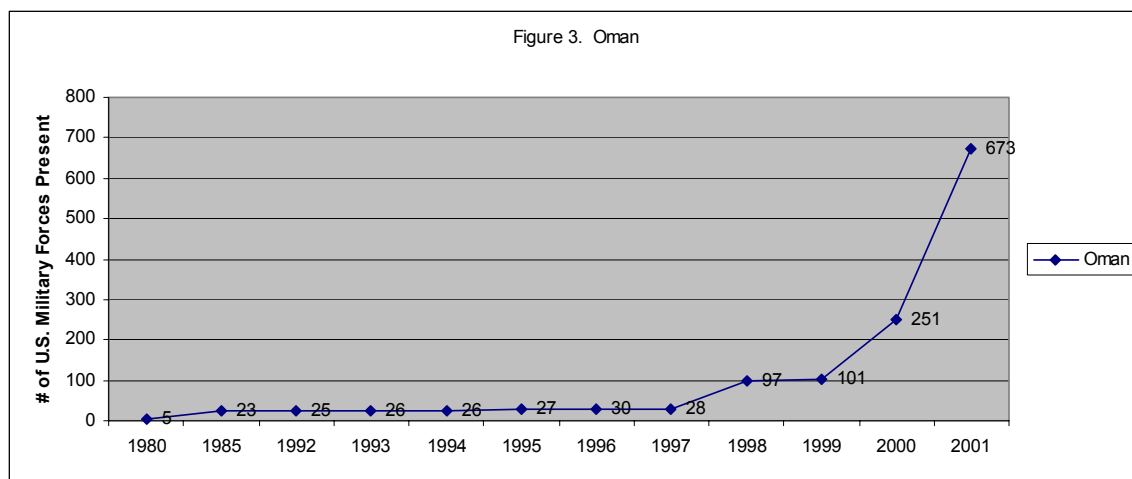
Oman has only in recent years begun to see an increase in the amount of U.S. military personnel on their soil mainly located at Seeb, Fujairah, and Masirah.<sup>49</sup> The

<sup>47</sup> USCENCOM, command history. [Online]: [www.centcom.mil](http://www.centcom.mil)

<sup>48</sup> Loeb.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

first real rise came in 1998 as the numbers climbed to 97 from what had averaged around 25-30 since 1985. Two years later, in 2000, that number had increased to 251, with another significant rise to 673 in 2001. So, in a very short time, Oman has seen a substantial increase in U.S. military personnel in-country. The majority of the U.S. military personnel are in Oman's capital, Muscat, although Oman is busy building a new airbase in Al Musnana'h, with a runway suitable for the B-52 bombers.<sup>50</sup>

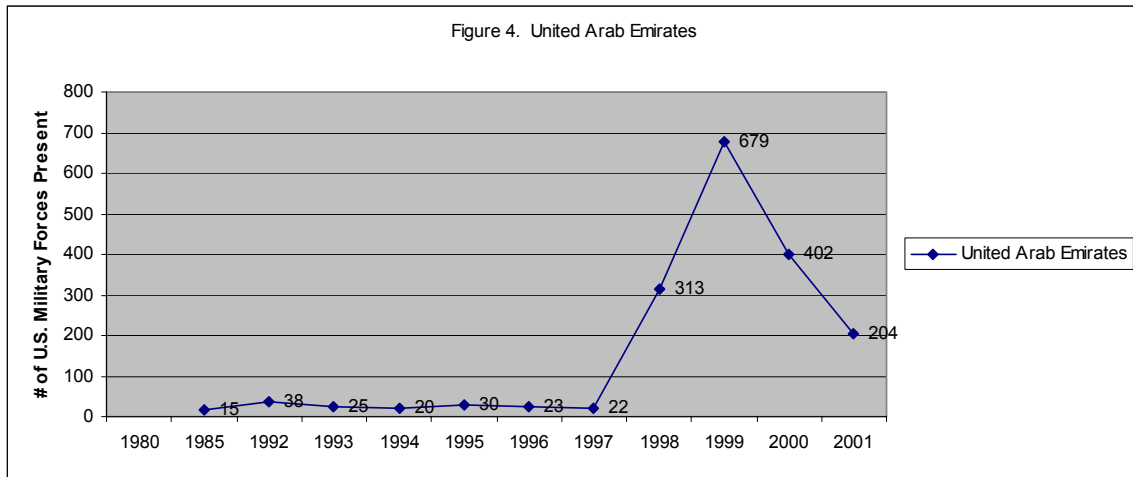


#### ***d. United Arab Emirates***

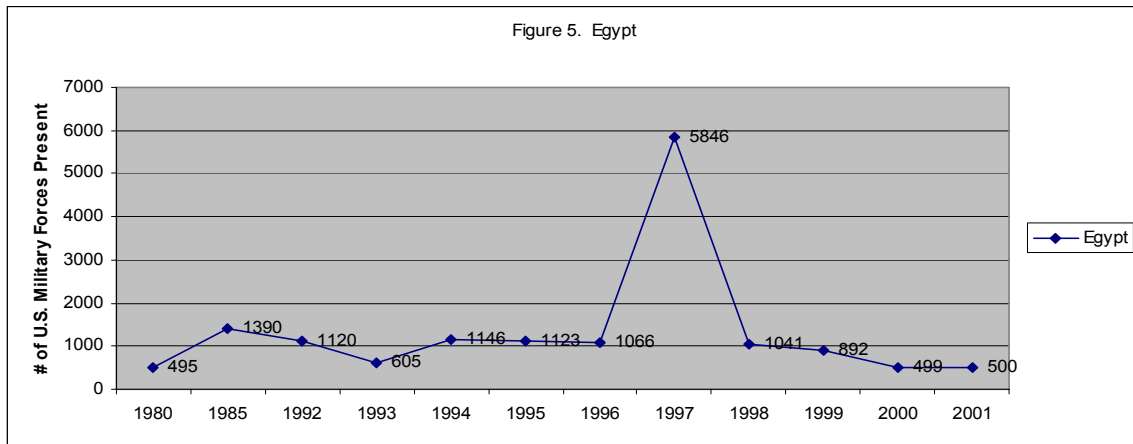
Like Oman, the UAE has also seen the U.S. military presence increase on its soil in recent years. The first substantial increase came in 1998 when the numbers increased from an average between 20 and 30 up to 313. 1999 brought another substantial increase to a peak of 679, but that number has dropped steadily into 2001, where 204 U.S. military personnel remained in the UAE. The U.S. military has no established bases to call its own, but the U.S. military presence in the UAE is mainly confined to airbases in Abu Dhabi, which U.S. reconnaissance aircraft

<sup>50</sup> Owen, Tom. Middle East, May, 2002.

and refueling tankers routinely use.<sup>51</sup> There are also military personnel at Jebel Ali, and Al Dhafra.<sup>52</sup>



Additionally, Bahrain is home to the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet, which consisted of 20 ships, 66 aircraft, and 11, 871 sailors and Marines in November of 2000.<sup>53</sup> There are also U.S. military troops in Manama.<sup>54</sup> Figure 5 shows the American presence in Egypt. Although there are no permanently stationed forces there, Egypt hosts numerous exercises and the number of Military Forces fluctuates considerably.



<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Loeb.

<sup>53</sup> Dyhouse, Tim. "Security, 20,000 GIs in Persian Gulf Region," VFW, Veterans of Foreign Wars Magazine, Kansas City, January 2001. Proquest.

## 2. Prepositioned Military Equipment

According to the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review, "deterrence in the future will continue to depend heavily upon the capability resident in forward stationed and forward deployed combat and expeditionary forces."<sup>55</sup> It also states that "The U.S. military has an existing shortfall in strategic transport aircraft."<sup>56</sup> The United States strategy of deterrence relies heavily on the ability to get well supplied military personnel to a potential hotspot quickly. One of the ways the United States is able to do that is through the prepositioning of military equipment.

The United States Army has a complete set of equipment for an armored brigade prepositioned in Kuwait,<sup>57</sup> while there is another prepositioned store in Qatar at Al Udeid airbase. This prepositioned store contains equipment for an armored brigade at the minimum.<sup>58</sup> The United States also maintains another load of military equipment for an armored brigade afloat in the region.<sup>59</sup> In addition, the United States has "Air Force bare base sets, water and fuel distribution equipment, medical equipment and supplies, and support vehicles."<sup>60</sup> The Air Force maintains their base sets in Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait.<sup>61</sup>

The United States has had an agreement with Oman for prepositioning equipment and emergency access to Omani

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<sup>54</sup> Loeb.

<sup>55</sup> Quadrennial Defense Review, 2001, p. 25.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>57</sup> Department of Defense, United States Security Strategy for the Middle East, May, 1995, p. 32.

<sup>58</sup> Owen.

<sup>59</sup> Hajjar, p. 27.

<sup>60</sup> U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) Chapter 6. Theatre Strategy: Forward Presence. [Online]:  
<http://www.milnet.com/milnet/pentagon/centcom/chap6/forward.htm>.

<sup>61</sup> Hajjar, p. 27.

bases since 1980. Defense Cooperation agreements have been signed with Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.<sup>62</sup> These agreements permit access and allow for the prepositioning of equipment in their prospective regions. These agreements have, historically, allowed for a very quick response to the region in times of crisis.

### **3. Military Exercises**

Military exercises play a large role in engagement activities as they provide opportunities for combined training and education, humanitarian assistance, security assistance and other vital functions. This high level of nation to nation military interaction dictates strong relationships and security agreements, ensuring U.S. access to host nation facilities. Military contact also improves relations with host nations by sustaining a high level of interaction which "allows for discussion of issues, develops individual relationships, and builds trust, confidence, and cohesion."<sup>63</sup>

Exercises in the region have appeared to be in decline in recent years. In 1993, USCENTCOM had 138 exercises scheduled throughout its area of responsibility to include Southwest Asia. These exercises had declined to 62 in 1997, and are declining still. A large portion of these exercises are also conducted utilizing U.S. military personnel which are already in the region, although, a large number of forces are still deployed to support exercises in the region. This accounts for part of the large fluctuations of military presence in the region.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Department of Defense, United States Security Strategy for the Middle East, May, 1995, p. 34.

<sup>63</sup> Exercises, USCENTCOM, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/ex-centcom.htm>.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

The DOD regards exercises as a critical way of keeping a forward based U.S. military presence in a region.<sup>65</sup> These exercises allow for a constant flow of combat troops into the region and maintain a check on the abilities to reengage with equipment already prepositioned.

A partial listing of exercises by country follows<sup>66</sup>:

- **Oman:** Accurate Test, Beacon Flash, Inferno Creek, and Sea Soldier
- **Kuwait:** Eager Mace, Indigo Desert, Intrinsic Action (3xYear), Iris Gold, Lucky Sentinel, and Ultimate Resolve
- **UAE:** Iron Magic
- **Saudi Arabia:** Earnest Leader, Emerald Falcon, Indigo Musket, Nautical Artist, Nautical Mantis, and Red Reef
- **Jordan:** Eager Light, Eager Tiger, Early Victor, Infinite Acclaim, and Infinite Moonlight
- **Qatar:** Earnest Action, Earnest Maverick, Eastern Viper, Impelling Victory, Indigo Desert, and Native Fury
- **Egypt:** Bright Star, Eagle Arena, Eager Salute, and Iron Cobra
- **Bahrain:** Inherent Fury, Initial Link, and Neon Falcon

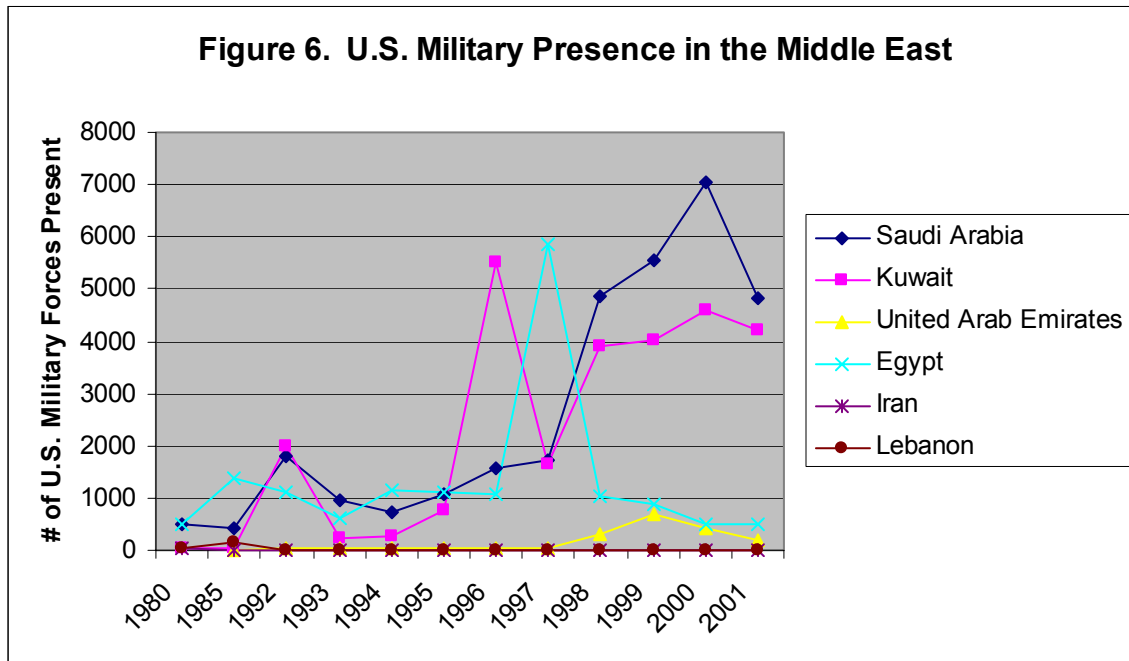
For purposes of this research, the remainder of the document will focus on two countries with a high level of American military presence: Kuwait and Saudi Arabia; the opinions of the populations of two countries with a medium to low level of military presence: the United Arab Emirates and Egypt; and then compare them to the opinions of the populations of two countries without a U.S. Military presence: Lebanon, and Iran. This information is diagrammed in Figure 6. In September, 2001, Saudi Arabia had 4805 U.S. military members in country; Kuwait had 4208

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<sup>65</sup> Department of Defense, United States Security Strategy for the Middle East, May, 1995, p. 30.

<sup>66</sup> Exercises, USCENTCOM, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/ex-centcom.htm>.

U.S. military members in country; Egypt had 500 U.S. military members in country; the United Arab Emirates had 204 U.S. military members in country; Lebanon had 3 U.S. military members in country; and Iran had 0 U.S. military members in country.



## B. SECURITY CHALLENGES, OR CONSEQUENCES?

Former Secretary of Defense William Cohen listed five categories of security challenges facing the United States in the Persian Gulf region: cross-border conflict, internal conflict, proliferation of dangerous military technologies, transnational threats, and humanitarian threats.<sup>67</sup> Included in his security concerns were unconventional attacks against the U.S. military. This concern was directly related to the presence of the military in the Persian Gulf.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Hajjar, p. 30.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

It must be noted that the majority of Muslims do not follow or endorse the teachings of Osama bin Laden or those who call for violence. Most are content to vent their frustrations in peaceful rallies and demonstrations. It is the radical few who feel led to utilize violence as a means to further their cause.

Attacks on U.S. forces and property in the Middle East can be directly tied to the rising opposition to the United States military presence in the Persian Gulf, if only to the opportunity it represents to attack a major symbol of the sovereignty of the United States. The United States presents itself as an inviting target, enticing those who stand willing to rise up against a foreign presence on their soil.

#### **1. Khobar Towers and the *U.S.S. COLE***

The United States presence in the Middle East has proven to be an irresistible target for violence by those opposed to the United States maintaining a forward presence the region. There have been several incidents which have shown the apparent vulnerability of the United States to unconventional violence. The bombing of Riyadh in November of 1995; the bombing of the Khobar Towers near Dhahran in June of 1996; and the bombing of the *U.S.S. Cole* in Yemen in October of 2000 all illustrate the potential costs of the U.S. continued forward presence. They also serve as remarkable examples of how "symbol and opportunity" can be utilized by the disenfranchised few who are willing to put it all on the line for their cause. The United States can no longer expect passivity when it forward deploys its forces. The message very well may be coming more clear to all dissatisfied Muslims willing to take a chance that the

United States is not untouchable, and that damage can, indeed, be inflicted.<sup>69</sup>

## **2. September 11, 2001**

Moving from the Middle East, the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon equate to an escalation of the conflict and a willingness to take the fight to the enemy. It marks a shift in the norm of Islamic fundamentalists who generally attack local areas of concern. In this regard, it gives credence to taking into account the opinions of the nations where you do business. They may no longer be satisfied with attacking local targets; there may have been a paradigm shift. Although the magnitude of the damage and loss of life shocked many of those with anti-U.S. tendencies, the public outcry in the Arab world against those actions was minimal. Years prior to the September 11, 2001, attacks it was noted that public dissent in the Arab world with the United States had grown to a point where there was a feeling of satisfaction that America may have gotten what it deserved in reference to Khobar Towers.<sup>70</sup> This sentiment has not changed, it has only deepened.

## **C. OUR OWN WORST ENEMY? (GALLUP POLL)**

Gallup conducted interviews of over 10,000 Muslims in nine countries in December, 2001 through January, 2002. Although the results of this poll have been criticized,<sup>71</sup> they are worth noting as the poll demonstrated a deep alienation from and lack of empathy of Muslims with the

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<sup>69</sup> Ajami, Fouad "The Sentry's Solitude," Foreign Affairs, Nov/Dec 2001.

<sup>70</sup> Conroy, Barbara. "Time Bomb: The Escalation of U.S. Security Commitments in the Persian Gulf Region," Cato Institute, August, 1996.

<sup>71</sup> The Ten Nation Impressions of America Poll report, Zogby International, April 11, 2002, criticized the Gallup poll for promoting and sensationalizing mainly the negative results, for possible pre-poll bias, and for aggregating results in a misleading and inaccurate way.

United States. Here are some of the highlights of this poll:

- 61% of the respondents said they did not believe Arab groups were behind the Sept 11 attacks.
- 67% thought the U.S. campaign in Afghanistan following the attacks was unjustified, with 9% thinking it was.
- The poll confirms a widespread unfavorable opinion of the U.S. in the Muslim world - 53% - with less than half of that - 22% - holding a positive opinion.<sup>72</sup>

Respondents in the survey were asked a number of questions in regards to the September 11, 2001, attacks, the United States response to those attacks, and the United States in general. If foreign public perception plays a role in the actions taken by the United States, then America would be prudent to step back and evaluate where it is headed. Even in Kuwait, 36% of the respondents thought that the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon was morally justified. Only 12% of the respondents thought that the West respects Islamic or Arab values, while 53% perceives the United States unfavorably. The poll goes on, but the figures already listed clearly describe the road upon which the United States is traveling.<sup>73</sup>

The results of the poll are disturbing when one thinks that one out of every two Muslims has a negative view of the United States, and a large number disbelieve the evidence provided that Arab men were responsible for the September 11, 2001, attacks. The feeling is that the

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<sup>72</sup> BBC News, 27 February, 2002, Poll says Muslims angry at U.S.  
[On-line]:  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/americas/newsid\\_1843000/1843838.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/americas/newsid_1843000/1843838.stm).

<sup>73</sup> Stone.

United States is conjuring up images which are anti-Muslim in an effort to single them out and gain American popular support for a perceived war against Islam. One out of every two is a big number, and should not go unnoticed by policymakers.

#### CHAPTER IV. THE RUMBLINGS OF PUBLIC DISSENT

The United States footprint continues to grow. Although near permanent facilities are being constructed and are being utilized for equipment storage, the rulers of the Persian Gulf States are quite adamant that U.S. military forces are only there temporarily. This has been reinforced recently with rumors beginning to surface of Saudi Arabia asking the U.S. to leave. Public dissent has grown to a level where many of the agreements with the United States are being made in "the shadows," while Arab rulers are maintaining a "get tough" stance toward the U.S. in their public eyes.<sup>74</sup>

Forward presence has put a strain on some relationships. If it's very visible, it can be counterproductive. We look for ways to lower the visibility. In part, we emphasize the prepositioning of equipment; we also look for bases that don't put us in areas where we're very visible. It's best to preposition and have low numbers of people off to the side. Low visibility basing is real important.<sup>75</sup>

Arab rulers are fighting to maintain legitimacy in the eyes of their public in large part because of the growing sentiment of U.S. fault for the "growing misery in their lands."<sup>76</sup> Osama bin Laden made an emotional call to the people of Islam to turn from its associations with the U.S.

...(T)he United States has been occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of its territories, Arabia, plundering its riches, overwhelming its rulers, humiliating its people, threatening its neighbors, and using its peninsula as a spearhead to fight the neighboring Islamic peoples.

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<sup>74</sup> Ajami, Fouad. "The Sentry's Solitude," *Foreign Affairs*, Nov/Dec 2001.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Anthony Zinni: "Avoid a Military Showdown with Iraq" *Middle East Quarterly*, September 1998.  
<http://www.meforum.org/article/408/>.

<sup>76</sup> Ajami, p. 2.

Bin Laden also called on all Muslims to join the war against the powers of the West.<sup>77</sup>

The Islamist movements that have emerged out of the failures of secularist regimes and opposition movements may present further challenges to American interests in the Middle East. "Whereas a generation ago Arab nationalists and some progressive grassroots movements challenged Western hegemony, nowadays the radicals are religious conservatives who oppose regional regimes and have proven to be effective foes of Israeli conquests as well."<sup>78</sup>

**A. A COMPARISON OF THE SENTIMENT IN COUNTRIES WITH U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE TO THE SENTIMENT IN COUNTRIES WITHOUT A U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE (ZOGBY POLL)**

Utilizing the data set forth in the Zogby poll, this paper will now look at the opinions of the populations of two countries with a high level of American military presence: Kuwait<sup>79</sup> and Saudi Arabia;<sup>80</sup> two countries with a medium level of military presence: the United Arab Emirates<sup>81</sup> and Egypt,<sup>82</sup>; and then compare them to two

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pgs 3-4.

<sup>78</sup> Editors, Middle East Report. Arcs of Crises: Background to the Failure of U.S. Policies in the Middle East. Winter 1998.

<sup>79</sup> Zogby International conducted interviews of 500 adults chosen at random nationwide throughout Kuwait. Interviews were conducted March 12-18, 2002. The survey's margin of sampling error is +/- 4.5%. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

<sup>80</sup> Zogby International conducted interviews of 700 adults chosen at random throughout locations in Central and Eastern Saudi Arabia and Western Provinces. Interviews were conducted March 14-28, 2002. The survey's margin of sampling error is +/- 3.8%. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

<sup>81</sup> Zogby International conducted interviews of 500 adults chosen at random throughout locations in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Interviews were conducted March 12-22, 2002. The survey's margin of sampling error is +/- 4.5%. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

countries without a U.S. Military presence: Lebanon,<sup>83</sup> and Iran.<sup>84</sup> Some interesting trends were noticed as I looked specifically at the cultural aspects which were measured: the attitudes toward American people, American freedom and democracy, American science and technology, American-made products, and American movies and television, and compared them with the opinions on American foreign policy: U.S. policy toward Palestine, U.S. policy toward Arab nations, the importance of the Palestinian issue, Palestine, American efforts to free Kuwait, and whether there was support for the continued U.S.-led war on terrorism.

Of interest to note are some of the prevailing attitudes the populations of the countries polled had toward Americans. In countries with governments that support and allow a high percentage of American military presence in their countries, you might expect a high opinion of Americans with opinion beginning to drop in countries that do not support a high presence. However, as you can see in Figure 7, the highest favorable attitude towards Americans comes from Lebanon, which does not have an American military presence, and the countries that do, all have favorability ratings of less than 50%. Another interesting note is that Egypt only shows one percentage

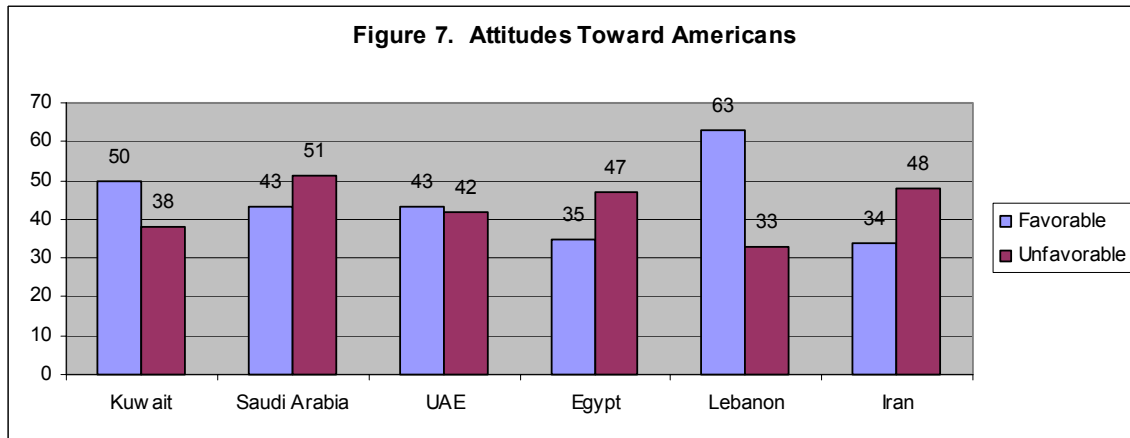
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<sup>82</sup> Zogby International conducted interviews of 700 adults chosen at random throughout locations in Cairo. Interviews were conducted March 16-27, 2002. The survey's margin of sampling error is +/- 3.8%. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

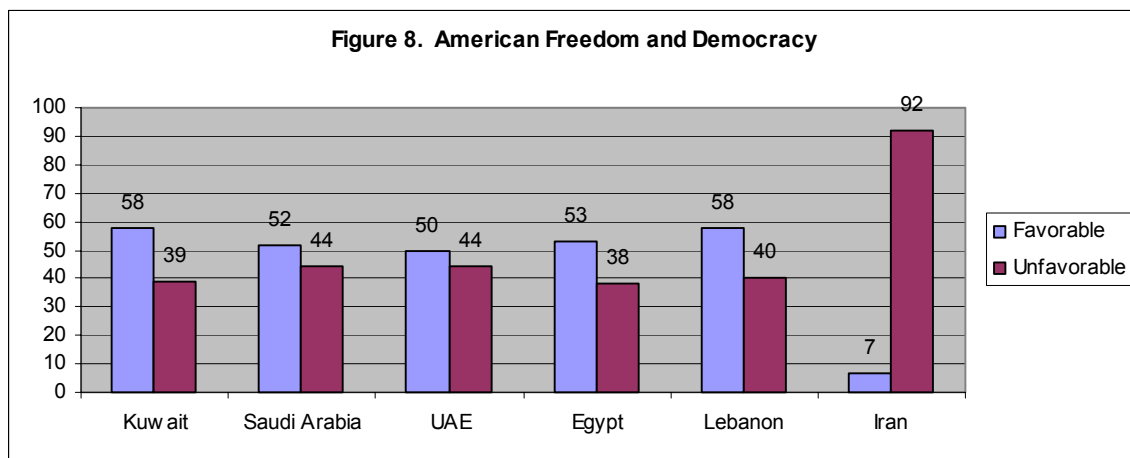
<sup>83</sup> Zogby International conducted interviews of 500 adults chosen at random nationwide throughout Lebanon. Interviews were conducted March 12-16, 2002. The survey's margin of sampling error is +/- 4.5%. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

<sup>84</sup> Zogby International conducted interviews of 700 adults chosen at random throughout locations in Tehran. Interviews were conducted March 18-30, 2002. The survey's margin of sampling error is +/- 3.8%. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

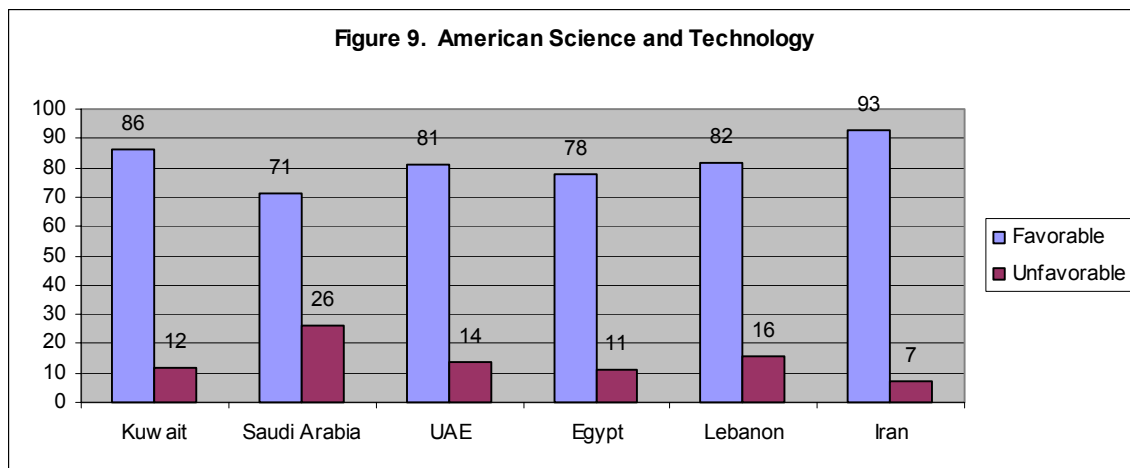
point greater than Iran in its outlook toward Americans, and Egypt is considered a strong ally of the United States.



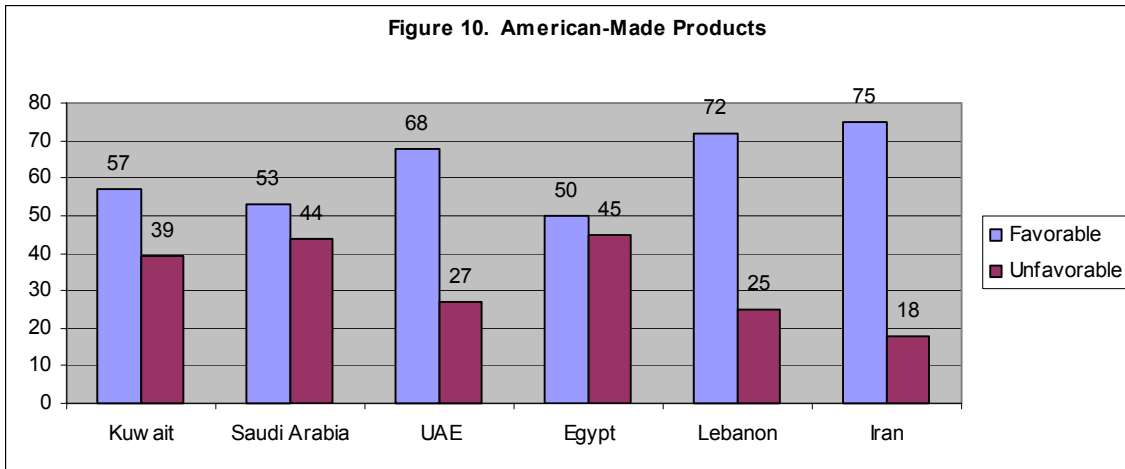
The opinions toward American freedom and democracy (Figure 8) are mostly positive, but with less of a gap. This means that there are significant high numbers of people with negative opinions toward what the United States ultimately stands for. There is very little difference noted, with the exception of Iran, between the nations with a high level of military presence and a lower level level of military presence. Of interest are the high marks given by Lebanon, which are not exceeded by any of American's allies.



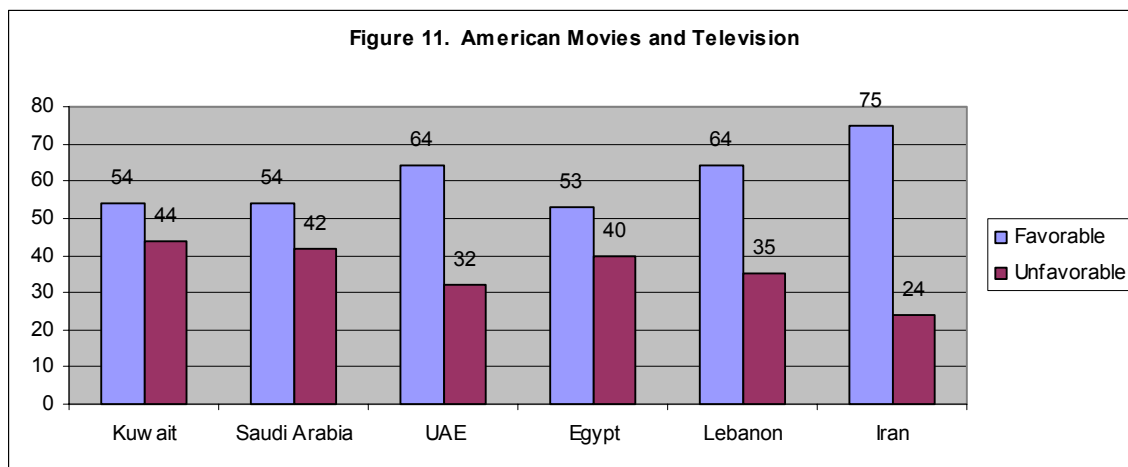
American science and technology receives high marks across the board, regardless of the stance taken by different governments to limit its availability (shown in Figure 9). An interesting cultural observation was the favorability towards American science and technology found in nations without high U.S. presence. Of interest is the very high favorability towards American science and technology that is found in Iran as it beats out all of the other nations in its pro-Western thinking. Saudi Arabia's population, whose ruling regime is one of the leading buyers of American military technology gives the lowest favorability ratings.



American-made products (Figure 10) received relatively high marks by those taking the poll. Of interest, though, is that in Egypt, with a medium to low military presence but a strong ally, and Saudi Arabia, with a high level of military presence, there is a much smaller gap in the between those favorable and those who are not.

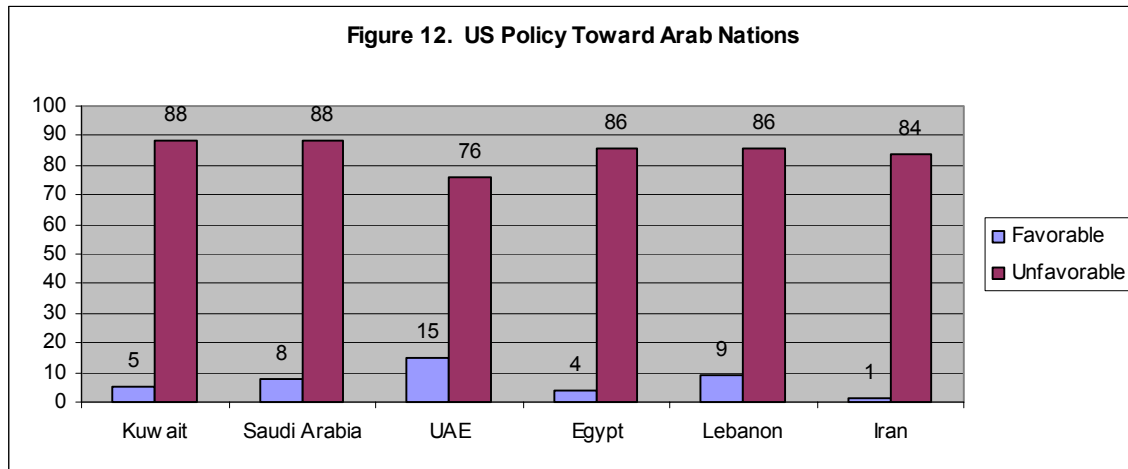


American movies and television receive (Figure 11) very high ratings, even in Iran, whose conservative regime pushes for the complete rejection of things American. In those countries which the United States considers allies and harbors a U.S. military presence, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait, there is less of a consensus.



Americans generally received high marks in regards to culture throughout the countries polled. The marks were generally favorable regardless of the level of U.S. military presence in the country. However, there was a slight decrease overall in the favorability rates in countries with U.S. military presence.

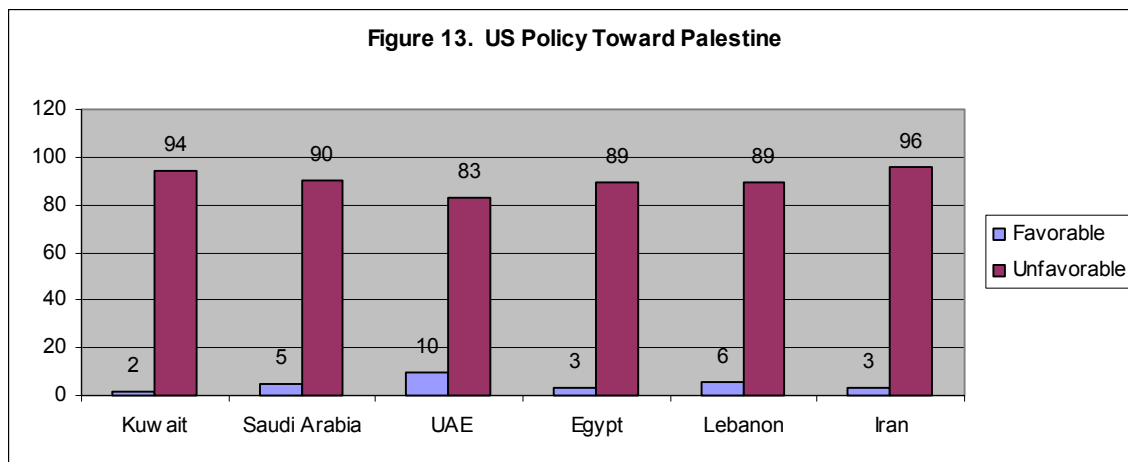
In matters of foreign policy, however, this begins to change. American culture covers only a small portion of the huge public outcry in the Arab world. The fact that the military is the most visible aspect of American foreign policy must be taken into consideration when looking at the outcry towards American policies.



The perceived American policy toward Arab nations (shown in Figure 12) was very negative, with almost non-existent positives. The UAE was also the only Arab nation to show a double digit support for U.S. policy toward Arab nations. Even Kuwait, whom you would expect to have a very high opinion of the United States in this matter only provided a 5% approval rating. Both Saudi Arabia and Kuwait had lower opinions than Lebanon, who only gave 9% approval.

In regards to the United States policy towards Palestine (shown in Figure 13), the United States receives very low marks. Nations with a strong U.S. footprint reported an extremely negative viewpoint, which was in keeping with the other countries shown in the survey. The only country which gave support into the double digits was the UAE. Kuwait provided the least favorable approval

rating of all the countries surveyed, coming in at 2%, while its unfavorable percentage of 94% was second only to Iran, coming in at 96% of respondents having an unfavorable viewpoint.



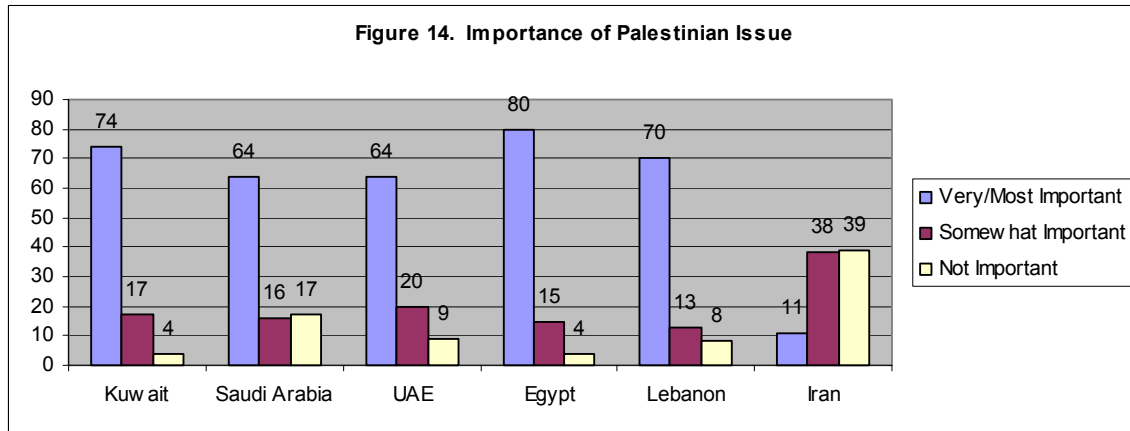
Protesting the Israeli raids on the Palestinian settlements in the West Bank, thousands of protestors surged on the U.S. embassy. In Saudi Arabia, 2000 people ignored a ban and demonstrated outside of the U.S. consulate in Dhahran. There was also a protest march in al-Qatif. In addition, Queen Rania of Jordan has taken to the streets in defiance of Israeli actions.<sup>85</sup>

"Conservative Persian Gulf Arab states have found themselves walking a tightrope as public anger mounts... [against the U.S.] for its pro-Israeli bias."<sup>86</sup> The importance of this issue is clearly shown in Figure 14. The Palestinian issue can be clearly seen to be a very

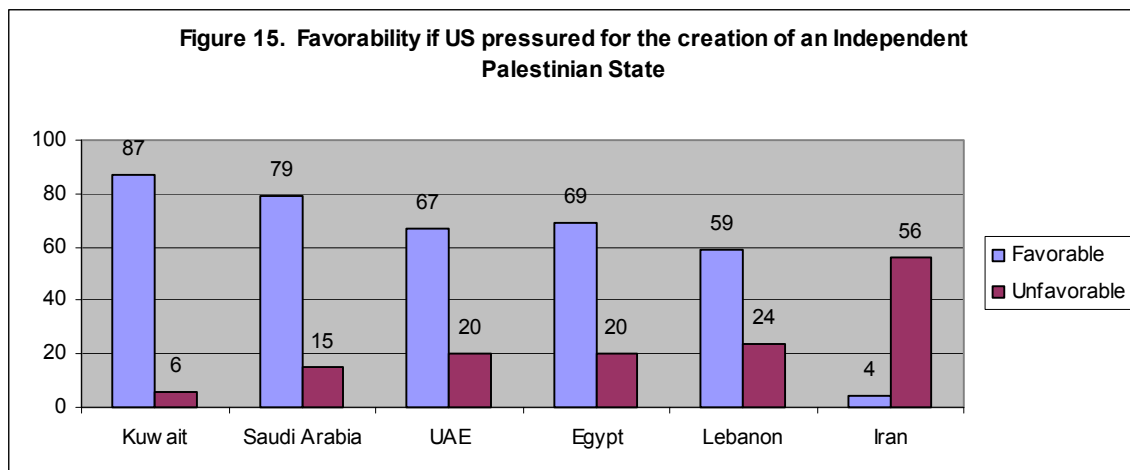
<sup>85</sup> Halaby, Jamal, April 10, 2002, Jordan's queen leads protest of Israel, The Associated Press.

<sup>86</sup> Salmon, Abbas, April 5, 2002, Bahrain Protesters Smash Windows at U.S. Embassy, Yahoo Headlines. Available [Online]: <http://ca.news.yahoo.com/020405/5/lijd.html>.

important issue. Iran's marks are surprising, though, given their support for groups fighting for independence.

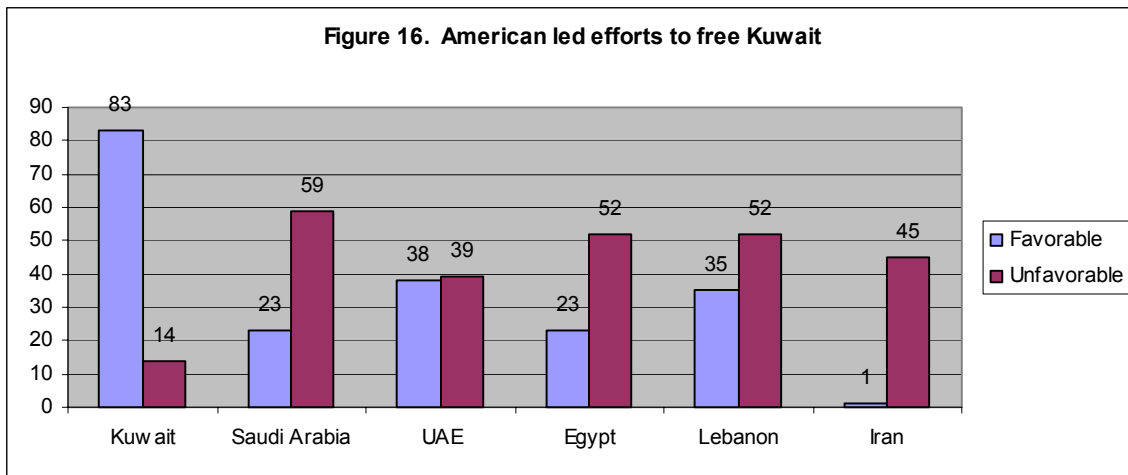


To show the state of concern with the Israeli/Palestinian issue, Shibley Telhami writes, "In a survey last month of Saudi elites—defined as media professionals, academics and chamber of commerce members—43 percent said that their frustrations with the United States would be completely removed, and 23 percent said they would be significantly reduced, if America brokered a just and



lasting peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict.”<sup>87</sup> This is clearly seen in Figure 15. He added, “When asked if their attitudes toward the United States were mostly based on its policies or on its values, 86 percent answered politics.”<sup>88</sup>

The results of the data from the polling questions asked about the American led military efforts to free Kuwait (Figure 16) are also interesting. Kuwait clearly appreciated it. But the results are not impressive anywhere else. In fact, all of the other countries this paper is looking at showed a negative perception of the United States using military force, even if it was for the benefit of an Arab state. The results in Saudi Arabia clearly show the trend against the American use of force in the region. As home to the largest number of American troops in the region, this is cause for concern.



The military footprint alone, as an instrument of U.S. policy, is insufficient to explain the negative public

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<sup>87</sup> Telhami, Shibley. Polling and Politics in Riyadh, The New York Times, March 3, 2002.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

opinion the United States has with the populations of the Middle East. The suffering of the Iraqi people in light of the U.S. initiated economic sanctions and the seemingly two-faced unrelenting American support of Israel greatly contribute to the feeling that the United States is not concerned with, and is indifferent toward the greater good and concerns of Arabs while protecting its own national interests.<sup>89</sup>

## **B. THE BIG ISSUES**

### **1. Dissent for U.S. Support of Israel and the Middle East Peace Process**

The United States has shown a strong support for the state of Israel since Israel achieved statehood. "For decades our great leaders have been yielding to 'special interest groups' in this country and, as a result, committing the U.S. to policies that betray our national interests. For decades our great leaders have been undermining the efforts of a people that are struggling for the same basic rights that our forefathers fought for centuries ago."<sup>90</sup>

Even though there seems to be a unified front in the United States for the support of Israel, this support is not universal around the world. Specifically, in the Arab world, there is a backlash against the United States for its support of Israel, both in the political and public spheres. This is made quite clear in a letter written by Safar Ibn Abd Al-Rahman Al-Hawali, a famous Saudi Islamist, to President Bush on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2001, when he lashed out

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<sup>89</sup> Telhami, Shibley. Public Opinion Could Flare Out of Control in Arab Nations, *San Jose Mercury News*, April 7, 2002.

<sup>90</sup> Hitti, Eveline. Guest *Editorial*, The John Hopkins Newsletter, November 2, 2000.

against the actions taken by the President following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Although, his letter was a call for the end of the violent methods that Americans are utilizing in Afghanistan and a stark defense of Islam and Muslims in general, the writer found the space to take the United States stance towards Israel as a target. "Their trust was not shaken even by its unjust position concerning the establishment of the Jewish state and the deprivation of the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination."<sup>91</sup>

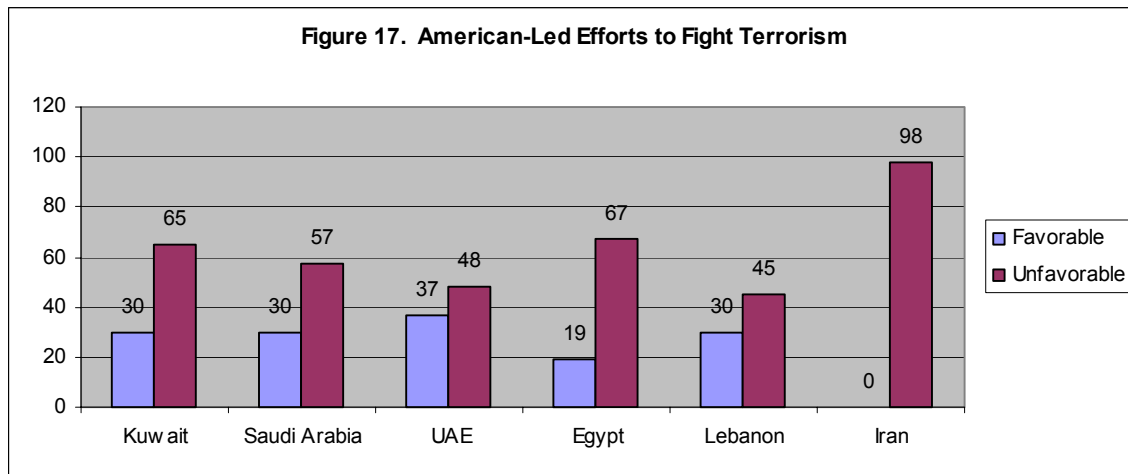
The letter also pointed out some of the perceptions Arabs have of American political rhetoric towards bombing in Israel and Palestine.<sup>92</sup> It does not take much to read through the lines and get at Al-Hawali's insinuations. As a Muslim supporter of Palestine, he clearly finds the United States public statements as ignorant and false. It seems that Americans are close-minded when it comes to actions by their allies, regardless of how brutal.

The United States has repeatedly shown support for Israeli actions that are just as violent as or worse than the Palestinian actions. We give legitimacy to Israel as a state, and none to the Palestinians, conveniently ignoring that Palestine is being illegally occupied by Israel as defined by International Law. While Americans continue to buy this logic, most Arabs do not, and are growing increasingly dissatisfied with the United States.

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<sup>91</sup> Al-Hawali, Safar Ibn Abd Al Rahman. "An Open Letter to President Bush," October, 2001, [Online]: <http://ianaradionet.com/letter/>.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*.



Even our allies in the Persian Gulf are beginning to distance themselves from the United States. With the recent unrest in Palestine and Israel, the American foreign policy has taken a beating. Many of our allies find it difficult to support the war on terrorism (Figure 17) while the United States continues to ignore Israeli aggression towards Palestine. President Bush's hand off approach has been publicly called into question by the leaders of Arab nations, who played the upper hand and essentially forced the United States to get involved. The Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah warned President Bush that the anger toward Israel and the United States is enormous, and he strongly urged the United States to take an "aggressive and personal role" towards a peace settlement. He stated, "The message is very clear. The U.S. is an important player. For the situation to improve, the United States will have to carry its responsibility."<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> VandeHei, Jim in Waco, Texas, Pope, Hugh in Hofuf, Saudi Arabia, Bahree, Bhushan in Paris and Robbins, Carla Anne in Washington, Apr 26, 2002, Desert Politics: Oil-Cutoff Talk Haunts U.S. Ties With Saudis but Step Is Unlikely, Wall Street Journal.

Despite the backlash, the United States does have a strategic interest in the peace process between Israel and Palestine. The Commission on U.S. and Israeli Relations believes that "the post-Cold War era of Arab-Israeli negotiations provides a new strategic validity for the U.S.-Israel relationship. Peace could promote stability in a volatile area of vital interest to the United States and provide the most effective way of reconciling America's stake in Israel's security and its stake in good relations with key Arab states."<sup>94</sup>

## **2. Sanctions on Iraq**

At the end of the Persian Gulf War, there was a general consensus among the Persian Gulf States and other members of the coalition against Iraq that sanctions would be an efficient way to maintain control over Saddam Hussein in order to curb further potential aggressive action and maintain stability in the Middle East.<sup>95</sup> Initially, the sanctions were quite successful in accomplishing these objectives. However, as time went on, the world began to receive glimpses of the suffering of the Iraqi population. This, combined with Saddam Hussein's ability to manipulate the sanctions and continue to gain concessions, contributed to a decrease in world support for sanctions.

Saddam was also able to utilize an effective information campaign which attributed the suffering of the Iraqi people to the indifferent and hard-lined stance of the Americans. The insistence of the complete dismantling of the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD) as a

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<sup>94</sup> Executive Summary, Enduring Partnership: Report of the Commission on U.S. - Israel Relations, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. On-line: <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/pubs/partexec.htm>.

<sup>95</sup> Graham-Brown, p. 17.

condition to stop the sanctions did little to endear the United States to the Arab world as it clearly watched the indifference the United States had to Israel's WMD program.<sup>96</sup> A decade after the implementation of the sanctions, the majority of the Arab world still blames the United States for the atrocities that Saddam Hussein committed against his own people.

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<sup>96</sup> Hajjar, pgs. 50-51.

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## CHAPTER V. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

MEQ: Do you make efforts to convey the right image of American troops? Zinni: Very much so. We participate in de-mining programs and various humanitarian programs. We are now working with the militaries to demonstrate how to respect and be good stewards of the environment, and how the military can maintain environmental standards of protection concerning such things as hazardous waste handling and removal. We hope the populations will look at the U.S. military not as threatening and not as a colonial power. We hope they won't buy into the extremists' ways of portraying us. Some leaders in our AOR recommend that our military leaders be more accessible to their media, to give us a human face. They ought to see a face and hear our words. It's a good idea, for people should see us-even if they do throw hard questions at us, questions we can't answer very well, and they do not believe our answers.<sup>97</sup>

### DATA ANALYSIS:

It is at this point of the paper that an attempt will be made to answer the research questions posed at the beginning. The first question posed was: would a reduction in the current US security posture of physical presence in the Middle East designed to bolster foreign public opinion continue to protect US national interests in the region? The data seems to indicate that a reduction in forces would bolster public perceptions. Once Saddam Hussein's future in Iraq is clear, the United States should put the security of the region back upon the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states and return to an "over the horizon" security posture.

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<sup>97</sup> Interview with Anthony Zinni: "Avoid a Military Showdown with Iraq" Middle East Quarterly, September 1998.

The second research question posed was: should our response to regional threats remain the same, or be altered? As demonstrated quite clearly in the polls, the Israel/Palestine peace process needs to be a priority in US policy-makers agendas. An answer to that dilemma will help diminish the need for such a large US presence in the region. The sanctions on Iraq need an overhaul, or just need to be done away with. Whatever route, the United States should be very concerned with the fate of the Iraqi population, if only from a humanitarian view.

The hypothesis of this thesis, "the United States military's physical presence in the Middle East is a leading cause of dissent among Arab nationals," is accurate. As the United States has increased its role in the security of the region over the last several decades, Arab opinion of the United States has spiraled downward. In some instances, the United States military has been openly attacked by those who oppose the U.S. presence in the region. The outcry against U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia continues to mount, despite the attempts to hide them deep in the desert. Although Saudi Arabia is somewhat dependent upon the United States to provide for its security and allows the highest numbers of U.S. military personnel into their country, public perceptions in Saudi Arabia towards the United States and its policies are some of the lowest in the region. The Saud family is intent to deal secretly with the United States while publicly denouncing and restricting U.S. intentions in the region. This can only hinder U.S. relations with the Saudi people, and the "cat and mouse" game may ultimately catch up with these tactics and lead to the demise of the Saudi ruling elite.

An analysis of the two countries with a high U.S. military presence, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, is troubling. Saudi Arabia leads the countries surveyed in its negative view of Americans with a 51% unfavorable opinion and American science and technology with 26% expressing an unfavorable opinion. Kuwait has the highest negative opinion, 44%, toward American movies and television, with Saudi Arabia coming in a close second with 42% expressing negative views. Kuwait also gives the lowest approval rating for the United States policy toward Palestine, 2%. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are tied for the highest negative opinions toward U.S. policies toward Arab nations with both nations coming in with 88% of those surveyed having an unfavorable opinion. The United States did well in its efforts to free Kuwait in Kuwait's opinion, with 83% being favorable, but Saudi Arabia led all nations surveyed with a 59% disapproval rating.

Although Kuwait (87%) and Saudi Arabia (79%) would react most favorably of the nations surveyed should the United States become involved in the Arab troubles against Israel and manage to solve the Middle East Peace Process and establish an independent Palestinian state, both nations have a very disturbing stance toward the American efforts to fight terrorism, which is in my opinion, where the line should be drawn in the sand. The high negative opinions, 65% for Kuwait and 57% for Saudi Arabia, are behind only Egypt, (another ally of the United States) coming in at 67%, and Iran, who has been named as a state sponsor of Terrorism coming in at 98%. This clearly shows that the allies of the United States support American efforts that help Arabs maintain a secure environment, but

are again American efforts to increase their own security. Although these two nations house the majority of American troops in the region, they appear to allow their presence for their own benefit. President Bush's statement, "You are either for us, or against us" may prove prophetic as we may see the "true colors" of our allies in the Middle East as we continue to promulgate the War on Terror.

The responses of the two nations which house only a medium to low level of military presence, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, is not as disturbing. The UAE gives the United States its highest favorability rating for its war on terrorism, although it is still only a minority 37% approval rating. The UAE also gives the United States the highest approval ratings for its policy toward Palestine and its policies toward Arab nations, although they are only a paltry 10% and 15% respectively. Of interest is how the UAE's results are quite similar to that of Lebanon and Iran in how well perceived American-made products and American movies and television are.

Egypt, however, seems to follow Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in how its public perceives the United States. Egypt gives the United States very low favorability rating in its policies toward Palestine, 3%, and its policies toward Arab nations, 4%. As said before, Egypt is second only behind Iran in its negative opinions about the United States war against terrorism. Egypt also has the second lowest approval ratings, with only Iran being lower, for the United States policies toward Arab nations (4%). Egypt's status as an American ally belies its opinions of U.S. policies.

It is interesting to note that the questions about Americans and American cultural aspects received the greatest favorability ratings on average in Lebanon and Iran, who do not have an American military presence, while questions about American polices received the worst ratings in countries that are home to members of the United States military, with the exception of Iran in certain instances. As the United States military is a very visible aspect of American foreign policy in the Middle East, it is very troubling that the worst foreign policy opinions are in those countries with the highest levels of U.S. military presence in the region.

#### **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The data in this thesis supports a conclusion that the forward deployment of U.S. military personnel has helped foster growing negative public perceptions of the United States and its policies. The increasing amounts of forward deployed military personnel may even have been counter-productive to U.S. foreign policy. It certainly appears to have been detrimental to the manner in which the United States and its policy is perceived. The data indicates that the larger the U.S. military presence is in a particular country, the less favorable the United States is perceived. Given this data, the United States should reassess whether its growing footprint in the Middle East is necessary for the protection of its national interests, or whether that footprint in itself is causing greater problems.

It is in this environment that the United States needs to carefully consider its next move. The on-going "War against Terrorism" lends immediate necessity to the

continued existence of the United States military presence in the Persian Gulf and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. However, once the issue of Saddam's future in Iraq is decided, the United States should force the security of the region back upon the Arab nations themselves.

Arguably, the least successful component of the U.S. security strategy over the last decade has been ensuring the ability of the Persian Gulf States to defend themselves. Despite billions of dollars of equipment sold in the region, the states remain incapable of self-defense and continued to look toward the United States to provide for their security. The United States should adopt a "train the trainer" mentality and make the GCC countries responsible for providing for their own collective security. Strengthening local self-defense capabilities; promoting GCC and inter-Arab defense cooperation; and enhancing the ability of Western forces to return and fight effectively alongside local forces in a crisis was and remains a credible three-tier approach behind the creation of the GCC security system.<sup>98</sup>

This approach reduces the necessity of maintaining a large and visible U.S. military presence in the region. The United States, if it must play a role in the protection of the region, should do so from a distance. The United States should pull the troops out of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and return to the "over the horizon" security posture that characterized the U.S. presence into the 1980's. The United States should also return to a policy

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<sup>98</sup> United States Security Strategy for the Middle East, Department of Defense, May, 1995.

of strict deterrence vice dual containment in the Middle East. The U.S. is more than capable of enforcing a policy of deterrence. With the physical infrastructure that is already in place, a quick response to aggressive action is doable. It also takes far less personnel to deter, than contain.

The United States is faced with the fact that the Arabs are quite sensitive to the visibility of the United States in the Persian Gulf. The majority of the Arab population views American policy as anti-Arab and anti-Muslim, and are fundamentally opposed to the American military presence.

Looking at the data results from Kuwait, it is easy to see that the popularity the United States enjoyed immediately after it secured the liberation of Kuwait from Iraq during Desert Storm has spiraled downward. As the United States has insisted upon maintaining a greater number of U.S. military personnel in Kuwait over the last decade, the minds and memories of the Kuwaiti nationals seem to have forgotten about the predicament that brought the United States to them in the first place. As shown in the polling data, the forgetfulness seems to have begotten resentment against the continued policies of the United States.

This result could quite possibly be duplicated in Central Asia where the United States has already ousted the Taliban and continues to pursue its War on Terror. If the United States does not pull its forces out of Afghanistan, it is quite likely that we will see the same opposition to American policies there as we now see in Kuwait. Indeed, even in Japan and Korea, where the United States has

provided a forward deployed military presence for much longer than in the Middle East, there seems to be a growing insistence that the United States should consider drawing down its forces. If South Korea were to reconcile with North Korea, that day would come much sooner than later on the Korean Peninsula.

This thesis is not suggesting a complete withdrawal of the United States from the foreign affairs of its allies, rather the interests of the United States would seem to be served the best if it stayed at arms length from the Middle East, possibly an "over the horizon" posture, while focusing on the support of key infrastructure that has streamlined the U.S. ability to return on short notice if necessary.

The United States is facing stiff foreign resolve against its stance and relationship toward and with Israel. Allies are distancing themselves, foreign populations are resentful, and foreign leaders are placed in precarious positions vis-à-vis their domestic populations. The actions of Crown Prince Abdullah demonstrate the reality that Arab public opinion is a factor in Arab rulers' decisions. The Israeli/Palestinian conflict has taken the wind out of the sails of the U.S. war on terrorism and it is currently reshaping the focus of the Bush Administration. The United States, in its pursuit of credibility in the Middle East, has found itself in the least credible position in recent history.

The continued suffering of the Iraqi people coupled with the failure of the United States to take action on the Israeli/Palestinian peace process exacerbates the growing anti-U.S. sentiment. The frustrations of the Arab

community were recently seen on the September 11, 2001, attacks against the United States.<sup>99</sup> This event, as well as previously carried out attacks, such as the bombings of the Khobar Towers and the *U.S.S. Cole*, violently demonstrate how deeply held some of the perceptions against the United States are. The United States is putting forth a large effort to protect the lives and the property of Americans around the globe. Once the violent majority few are weeded out, the U.S. should turn its attention to some of the more popular issues for dissent in the region.

The United States has a long way to go before the Arab world embraces a more positive perception of American policies. The Middle East has a long and distinguished history of being taken advantage of by foreign powers, which forms part of a history that fuels public perceptions. The United States national interest of security of Israel will begin to dictate how the future will continue to unfold. The United States would do well to support the establishment of a Palestinian State and pledge an unwavering support for its security and continued existence alongside of Israel. Taking these steps might start the long process of recovering a positive public position in the region.

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<sup>99</sup> Hajjar, pgs. 51-53.

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